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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MANAMA 000089

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [KDEM](#) [BA](#)

SUBJECT: BAHRAIN'S CROWN PRINCE CONSOLIDATING HIS AUTHORITY

REF: IIR 6 960 0007 08 DTG 160613Z JAN 08

Classified By: Ambassador Adam Ereli for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

- 1.(C) Summary: Bahrain's King appears to be working to ensure a smooth succession for the Crown Prince. After elevating the Crown Prince to Deputy Prime Minister, King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa issued a series of royal decrees that removed the Prime Minister and his loyalists from the military chain of command (reftel), King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa.
- 2.(C) Following a series of royal decrees that removed the Prime Minister and his loyalists from the military chain of command (reftel), King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa.
- 3.(SBU) In an open letter to his father published in local newspapers on January 15, the Crown Prince said that red tape in some government departments was hindering the country's economic development.
- 4.(C) The Crown Prince clearly viewed the episode as a victory. When Ambassador called on him January 17, the Crown Prince chuckled at one point and said he was "happy to see the Prime Minister go."
- 5.(C) Most observers agree that the Crown Prince has scored some points against his uncle, the Prime Minister. For example, Shi'a MP and Al-Wakeel in the National Assembly, Ali bin Ali Al Khalifa, said the Crown Prince's move was a "victory for the people of Bahrain."
- 6.(C) Interestingly, the Crown Prince chose to make his move only after the Prime Minister's January 13 departure for an official visit to Thailand.
- 7.(C) In the final stroke of what some local observers have breathlessly called a bloodless coup, the Crown Prince announced February 7 the appointment of a new Prime Minister.
- 8.(C) Comment: In the course of five short weeks the Crown Prince, in public ways, asserted important new influence over both the military and the government.
- 9.(C) Comment continued: The Prime Minister's ability to stymie economic reform and to influence military policy is diminished, but he remains a powerful figure in Bahrain.